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NEWS RELEASE

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TWO INDIVIDUALS CHARGED WITH MAKING FRAUDULENT CLAIMS FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE IN THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE KATRINA

SACRAMENTO—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that two former Sacramento residents have been charged with fraud offenses related to claims for disaster assistance arising out of Hurricane Katrina.

In September 2005, the Attorney General for the United States Department of Justice created the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force designed to deter, investigate, and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft, procurement fraud, and insurance fraud. The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force-chaired by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division-includes the FBI, the U.S. Inspectors General community, the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys, and others.

These cases were investigated by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney Michelle Rodriguez, who is prosecuting these cases, described each matter as follows:

- *United States v. John M. FORD*: On March 6, 2008, FORD, 35, of Sacramento, was charged with five counts of mail fraud, and two counts wire fraud in connection with false claims to an agency of the United States (the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)). FORD is alleged to have stolen over \$4,370 of funds allocated for disaster relief victims.
- *United States v. Andre D. MORNING*: On March 20, 2008, MORNING, 52, of Sacramento, was charged with five counts of mail fraud, one count of making a false claim to FEMA, and a single count of lying to federal agents during the investigation. MORNING is alleged to have stolen over \$1,700 of funds allocated for disaster relief victims.

On March 10, 2008, FORD was arrested and remains in federal custody on these charges. This morning FORD appeared before U.S. District Court Judge Lawrence K. Karlton in U.S. District Court and the case was continued to April 1, 2008 for a change of plea hearing. Also today, MORNING was arrested in Yuba City, California. MORNING is scheduled to be arraigned today at 2:00 p.m. before U.S. Magistrate Judge Edmund F. Brennan.

For each of the mail and wire fraud offenses each defendant faces 20 years imprisonment, for the false statement charge MORNING faces five years imprisonment, and for the false claim charge MORNING faces an additional five years imprisonment. Each defendant, upon conviction, also is subject to a \$250,000 fine per count and a three-year term of supervision.

The charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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